



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCE: Clos Pepe Vineyard, Santa Rita Hills. This family-run estate is a small jewel in the highly regarded Santa Rita Hills appellation with only 28 acres of vines (24 of which are planted to Pinot Noir). The vineyard is farmed with meticulous attention to detail, year-round hand labor and sustainable agriculture methods. The soils are low-vigor, sandy loam and are rich in calcareous shale. Yields this vintage averaged about one ton per acre. The block sourced for Ken Brown Pinot Noir is planted to the Pommard clone.

VINTAGE: Harvest 2003 was one of the warmest vintages on record in the Santa Rita Hills and one of our earliest harvests ever. The growing season began with unseasonably warm temperatures that triggered budbreak in late January, nearly a month ahead of normal. Rain, wind and cool weather experienced during the May bloom period caused poor fruit set in some clusters and lightened yields. Summer temperatures were above average, but helped promote better natural balance in the naturally high acid Pinot Noir grown at Clos Pepe.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: This Pinot Noir received the same careful handling in the cellar that the grapes experienced in the Clos Pepe vineyards. Clusters were hand sorted before being de-stemmed and gravity fed to fermenters. The must was immediately chilled for a pre-fermentation cold soak where the most beneficial extraction of color, aroma and flavor occurs. During fermentation, concentration was enhanced by gently punching down the cap, taking care not to break any skins or seeds and risk harsh tannins. The wine aged nine months in French oak barrels with 40% new French oak in the blend.

Understandably intense from this year's scant 1.0 ton per acre yields, this Pinot Noir balances pure fruit expression with admirable structure and rich tannins. Aromas and flavors of dense, ripe blueberry, blackberry, black plum, lavender and anise are infused with a subtle mineral component. The opulent mid-palate culminates in a resonating finish. This wine promises exceptional development of flavor and complexity with additional cellaring.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.11 g/l

pH: 3.61

Alcohol: 14.5%

Sugg. Retail Price: \$45.00

Production: 122 cases